

Bank to Mark

Sept 3, 1960

BACK TO WORK.

Jn. 21:3 Simon Peter saith unto them, "I go a fishing."

This text sounds more appropriate for a vacation theme-I go a fishing. It reminds us of running streams, mountains and forests. Or of some beautiful lake nestling in some upper meadow, Or of a bay with its interesting rocky shores and inviting beaches.

But when Peter said, "I go a fishing", it meant no vacation for him. He had earned his living as a fisherman—that was his trade. And so Peter's statement meant back to the old job, resuming the task of his former occupation. Peter had been with Jesus for 3 yrs And what a schooling that was! Such learning, such inspiration, such experience! But now, Jesus was gone and for Peter it meant back to work.

Now we can understand the appropriateness of this text for an after-vacation theme. We are all coming home again to fill our old places and to take up our usual tasks.

I have often wondered how Peter felt to go back to his old trade after such a three yrs with Jesus! A man stood for a long time on the shore gazing at the beautiful ocean and sky then exclaimed, "Fancy going back to auctioneering after this!"

And we often feel the same way. We wonder how we are going back to our usual routines after having had such wonderful vacation experiences. Well, it depends altogether upon the Spirit with which we return to our several tasks.

The brave uncomplaining way in which Peter steps down from apostle to fisherman and, after 3 yrs with X, takes up again the forsaken task, the boats and the nets and the hard work they represent, is a splendid example to us.

I. The immediate response to Peter's declaration.

All the disciples with him said, "We also come with thee". All working together at the common task.

Our church work is our common task. We, too, are fishermen for the Lord. The fisherman seeks the fish; he does not expect the fish to come to him. He goes where they are and takes them as they are, then makes them into what they ought to be.

We must bring as many as possible to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, we must introduce them to God, we must put them in contact with spiritual light and life and power.

II. Their failure and success.

At first they reckoned without Christ. I don't suppose they thought that X had anything to do with fishing. Many of us

2. make the same mistake. We don't imagine that X has anything to do with our school work, our house-keeping, our trade, our business.

Yes, and you will find many workers in our churches who do their church work without X. It is possible to teach Sunday school without X. To do ladies aid work without X. To attend church and worship without X. To perform the duties of an officer of the church without X. Many do, but they do not succeed as they should.

2. But this is to the everlasting credit of Peter and his disciples with him—**They went forth.** They didn't just talk about it. They went right to work. Not success in itself, but a large part of one's success is pitching into the work with all one's might. "I go" They went.

3. But at first they didn't catch any fish. After a hard night of it they had nothing to show for their efforts. Then thru the dim light of dawning day ~~John espied a man~~ ~~walking~~ from the shore came a voice which John recognized as that of Jesus, giving them instructions as to how to cast their nets. And, obeying these instructions, lo! their boat became filled with fish!

From the shore of our failures God always speaks to us, giving us simple ~~instructions~~ directions to follow, and when we obey our failure is turned into success.

Every dark cloud has a silver lining and every dark failure has a dawning light thru which we can see Christ walking and hear him tell us just what to do in order to succeed.

If this be true, our slogan should be, "**Back to work with Christ**". Let us listen to him. Let us obey him. Let us follow his directions.

III. After their catch Christ made Peter a shepherd of his sheep. From ~~apostle~~ Fisherman, Apostle, Fisherman, Shepherd. Not merely a soul winner but a care-taker of souls. A soul-feeder. God's children brought into a family fellowship concerning the higher things of life.

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